

## Past President's Message

Mr. President, Officers, Delegates and Guests:

It is my distinct honor to stand before you today, among this illustrious group of past presidents, to bring this year's message to you. In reviewing the committee reports for the year, we were all very pleased to see that NSA membership is once again growing.

As I prepared to organize my thoughts for this presentation, I had cause to reflect on why I chose to join NSA many years ago, and if you are over the age of 50, you might understand how difficult it can be for some of us to remember back that far! But, after much effort, I believe that I nailed it down.

1. I joined NSA because I did not think that I knew all there was to know about the accounting or tax preparation profession.
2. I joined NSA because I wanted to learn how to better serve my clients.
3. I joined NSA so that I could attend meetings where I could meet and exchange ideas with other respected professionals.
4. I joined NSA in order to enhance my reputation with my clients, the general public, my peers and with governmental agencies with which I deal regularly.
5. I joined NSA to keep informed about ever changing developments in our profession.
6. I joined NSA because I wanted to be represented as a professional before local, state and federal governments.
7. I joined NSA because I believe in its Code of Ethics and its core values of competence and integrity.
8. I joined NSA because it was **the** leader for the unlicensed accountant in our profession.

Strangely enough, all of my reasons for joining NSA are still relevant today. In fact, I concluded that ***Today, I Need NSA More Than Ever Before.***

More importantly, take a moment to reflect on why you joined NSA. Many of your colleagues in your local chapter are not members of our society. Tell them why you joined, and what NSA has done to help you along your chosen career path.

Without exception, virtually every one of us standing before you got our start in giving back something to our profession at our local chapter level. Whether you volunteer to handle your chapter's membership drive or just volunteer to serve an hour or so on your nominating committee; whether you serve on your seminar committee or serve on your local board, it does not matter ***how*** you participate – as long as you do something! It is your distinct advantage to have your voice heard in your profession, and only a fool would ignore the benefits that can accrue by taking an active role in helping to determine our future direction.

Whether we like to admit it or not, we are a “mature” group of professionals. Who will take hold of the reins and lead our Society ten years from now, 20 years from now and even further into the future? (Many think it might be Joe Kaufmann-but even that is not a sure thing!). It is in our direct interest to involve those younger members in some type of leadership role at virtually each and every level of our profession. As we have found out over the years, Leaders are not born – rather they are taught, cultivated and developed. ***Today, the National Society of Accountants Needs You More Than Ever Before!***

Nobody knows the members of your local chapter any better than you do. Should you find a talented individual willing to participate, take them “under your wing”. Provide encouragement, provide guidance, and help set that individual on the road to future leadership positions. It is in your direct interest to do so!

## Past President's Message

As I look back on the results of my NSA membership – a period spanning nearly 30 years, and one which would classify me as a “Short – Timer” standing next to some of these Past Presidents, I can vividly recall a number of serious attacks on our rights to practice. In the 1970's it was the first Uniform Accountancy Act of my career, seeking to deny the unlicensed the right to practice. In the 1980's another Uniform Act appeared, and the Savings & Loan scandal came to light, and immediately following, we had to comply with a completely new set of rules and regulations, most of which were expensive to implement.

In the late 1990's, yet another Uniform Act appeared, and the Arthur Anderson scandal raised its ugly head, bringing along with it scorn for our profession as accountants were viewed by the public in utter disdain. Today, we are beginning to see the fallout from the most recent Mutual Fund scandals, and again, our profession is called into question, and subjected to ridicule!

However, in each and every instance, NSA positioned itself in the middle of the discussions – to represent **my** interests, and to represent **your** interests to the best of its abilities. Ladies and Gentlemen, because all of these instances of NSA intervening on our behalf, ***Today, We Need NSA More Than Ever Before!***

A very recent book is out by House Speaker Dennis Hastert in which he advocates the complete scrapping of the Internal Revenue Code as well as the elimination of the IRS. It was really little more than interesting reading until the President mentioned on one of his campaign stops that “we must seek alternatives to the current income tax code”. This raises the specter that this might be viewed as something more than just another “fleeting thought”. Most of us earn our living doing income tax preparation, and any change affecting the very foundation of the entire taxation system would certainly have a major impact on our entire profession. We will need for our voices to be heard on this issue, and NSA must be viewed as a major player in any discussions, which might take place on this most important issue. ***Today, We Need NSA More Than Ever Before!***

Earlier, this year, when the National Taxpayer Advocate, Nina Olsen, submitted her annual report to Congress, she included a recommendation to implement a national program of registration for all tax preparers. Registration, in and of itself, is probably not a bad idea! However, this proposal contained both annual CPE requirements as well as an annual testing requirement. Alarming, this legislation has already cleared both the House and Senate and now sits waiting for the two bodies to reach an agreement on the bill. Thanks to the quick action by your National Society, key legislators were informed of the potential nightmare that this legislation would create for the IRS, but more importantly, explained how such legislation would impact the average practitioner. Partially because of NSA's intervention, what appeared to be a “slam-dunk” regarding passage now has the legislation stalled in its current state with extremely dim prospects for ultimate success. So, again I conclude that Today, ***We Need NSA More Than Ever Before!***

When the new IRS Commissioner, Mark Everson was appointed last May, he stated that he brought with him three primary objectives. Most noticeably included was the Services' desire to improve its **enforcement** capabilities. Already, only months later, we have seen a significant increase in the number of compliance actions brought by the IRS, and frankly, we expect to see that activity increased much more as time goes by. You should also brace yourself for another wave of new taxpayer penalties, as those will also certainly be forthcoming.

When President Bush submitted his budget to Congress this year, that budget included a 5% increase in the Services' request for enforcement funding-the only area where an increase was proposed. As those of us in the profession already know, along with increased enforcement comes increased exposure for us

## Past President's Message

as professionals. We need someone looking out for our interests. So, ***Today, We Need NSA More Than Ever Before!***

As a member of one of the Commissioner's Advisory Groups, we meet regularly with senior IRS officials to provide input relative to various projects the Service wishes to pursue. Currently, we have been seriously discussing the creation, application and enforcement of a number of **new Preparer penalties**. Those of you who were around in the '70's, which was when the original set of Preparer penalties became law, may remember the sheer turmoil, which resulted when that legislation was implemented. Education of IRS employees virtually consisted at the time of a "Learn as You Assess" training program, and many innocent preparers were assessed penalties that never should have been assessed at all. I am pleased to inform you that in the eyes of the Internal Revenue Service, NSA is held in the highest regard, and their input is sought in virtually all matters when practitioners may be affected by their proposals. If new penalties are to be created, assessed and collected, I want my voice heard in the process-and that voice is best heard through the National Society of Accountants. ***Today, We Need NSA More Than Ever Before!***

My membership in the National Society of Accountants dates back to 1977-a fact of which I am extremely proud. I can honestly stand before you today and **state that the professional status I have achieved as well as all that I am professionally today could not have been achieved with the help of the National Society of Accountants!** Our partnership has born fruit, and continues to blossom almost 30 years later.

***Today, I Need NSA More Than Ever Before, and Today, You Need NSA More Than Ever Before!***  
Help your colleagues get active in your local chapters-and tell your colleagues who are not currently members why you joined NSA, because ***Today, We Need Each Other More Than Ever Before!***

This Speech was given at the 2004 NSA 59<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention in San Antonio, Texas, by Jeffrey Adelstone, EA, CFP, RFC, ATA, ABA, ECS, Past President of NSA, member of the Accreditation Council for Accountancy and Taxation, and Chair of the IRPAC-IRS Advisory Group on August 30, 2004.